## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. A method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising:
- (a) counting syllables in each word of said text segment; and
- (b) assigning a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word.
- 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.
- 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said playing rate of a given generated word is increased where the playing rate indicator of said word is indicative of a higher number of syllables and slowed where the playing rate indicator of said word is indicative of a lower number of syllables.
- 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising decreasing the duration of pauses associated with selected punctuation in said text segment.
- 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said playing rate indicator of said each word is changed when a syllable count of said each word increases above a threshold number of syllables.
- 6. A method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising:
- (a) performing a grammatical analysis of said text segment; and
- (b) assigning a playing rate indicator to each word of said text segment based on said grammatical analysis.

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- 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising generating speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.
- 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising decreasing the duration of pauses associated with selected punctuation in said text segment.
- 9. The method of claim 8, wherein said grammatical analysis comprises the identification of a part of speech of the words in the text segment.
- 10. The method of claim 9, wherein said playing rate indicator of said each word is set to reflect a slow playing rate for certain parts of speech and a fast playing rate for other parts of speech.
- 11. The method of claim 10, wherein said certain parts of speech comprise nouns.
- 12. The method of claim 11, wherein a word with a playing rate indicator indicative of a slow playing rate is omitted from the generated speech.
- 13. A method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising:
- (a) comparing each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and
- (b) assigning a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said comparison.
- 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising generating speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.



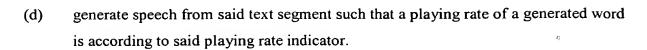


- 15. The method of claim 14, further comprising decreasing the duration of pauses associated with selected punctuation in said text segment.
- 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said playing rate indicator of each word is set to reflect a slow playing rate when said each word matches an entry in said inventory.
- 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising omitting from the generated speech a word with a playing rate indicator indicative of a slow playing rate.
- 18. A computing device comprising:
- (a) a processor;
- (b) persistent storage memory in communication with said processor, storing processor readable instructions adapting said device to:
  - (i) receive a text segment;
  - (ii) count syllables in each word of said text segment; and
  - (iii) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word.
- 19. The computing device of claim 17, wherein said processor readable instructions further adapt said device to:
  - (iv) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.



- 20. A computing device comprising:
- (a) a processor;
- (b) persistent storage memory in communication with said processor, storing processor readable instructions adapting said device to:
  - (i) receive a text segment;
  - (ii) perform a grammatical analysis of said text segment; and
  - (iii) assign a playing rate indicator to each word of said text segment based on said grammatical analysis.

- 21. The computing device of claim 19, wherein said processor readable instructions further adapt said device to:
  - (iv) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.
- 22. A computing device comprising:
- (a) a processor;
- (b) persistent storage memory in communication with said processor, storing processor readable instructions adapting said device to:
  - (i) receive a text segment;
  - (ii) compare each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and
  - (iii) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on the results of said comparison.
- 23. The computing device of claim 21, wherein said processor readable instructions further adapt said device to:
  - (iv) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.
- 24. A computer readable medium storing computer software that, when loaded into a computing device, adapts said device to:
- (a) receive a text segment;
- (b) count syllables in each word of said text segment; and
- (c) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word.
- 25. The computer readable medium of claim 23, wherein said computer software further adapts said device to:



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- 26. A computer readable medium storing computer software that, when loaded into a computing device, adapts said device to:
- (a) receive a text segment;
- (b) perform a grammatical analysis of said text segment; and
- (c) assign a playing rate indicator to each word of said text segment based on said grammatical analysis.
- 27. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein said computer software further adapts said device to:
- (d) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.
- 28. A computer readable medium storing computer software that, when loaded into a computing device, adapts said device to:
- (a) receive a text segment;
- (b) compare each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and
- (c) assign a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on the results of said comparison.
- 29. The computer readable medium of claim 27, wherein said computer software further adapts said device to:
- (d) generate speech from said text segment such that a playing rate of a generated word is according to said playing rate indicator.

